

## Deer Progress Report

February 28, 2011

Compiled by Sandy Ritchie with input from Lee Kantar, John Pratte  
and the Wildlife Management Section

### Accomplishments for Week of February 20 – 26

**Deer Plan** – Sandy Ritchie continued to develop the Department's Deer Plan. A draft Plan will be distributed to senior staff on February 28. Ritchie will incorporate input and finalize a draft for distribution among interested stakeholders at a meeting later in March.

**Monitoring Winter Severity** – Staff monitored winter conditions [temperature, snow depths, deer sinking depths, and snow profile characteristics] at 26 individual monitoring stations throughout the state to estimate the impact of winter conditions on deer mortality.

**Aerial DWA Surveys** - Region C flew watersheds in the major part of 10 townships, Regions D flew 7 towns, and Region G flew 4 towns.

**Ground DWA Surveys** – Region E conducted ground surveys in a DWA in Misery Gore.

#### **DWA Harvest Plans**

- Region E reviewed 1 plan for timber harvesting in a DWA.
- Bureau of Parks and Lands [BP&L] biologist reviewed a BP&L harvest in Region E and reviewed Gardner Land Company's Habitat Management Area plans for Region F.

**Cooperative DWA Management** – a landowner in Region G added 15 acres to a cooperative management area as a result of additional documented deer use.

#### **Deer Research, Surveys, and Data Collections**

- Region C processed the remains of 3 doe deer which included 2 reproductive tracts and a total of 5 fetuses. This information is used to derive an index to female productivity and to provide information on breeding chronology.
- Region E evaluated cause of death of 2 deer found dead near residences in Sangerville and Parkman, and distributed informational fliers to the Dover Foxcroft Police Department regarding deer fetus collections.



## Information and Outreach

- Region B presented a DWA management program at the Unity Rotary Club.
- Region E responded to a deer hunter from West Virginia inquiring about deer hunting opportunity in WMD 9.
- Region G presented information on “Deer – How Are They Doing This Winter” for WAGM-TV. [They also talked about the wild turkey trap and transfer program and relocation of an additional 49 birds in Perham].
- Region G discussed DWA management at a Portage town meeting; specifically, how a potential harvest in a DWA in the town will benefit deer.
- John Pratte sent 2 mailings: one to private pilots [guides, landowners, etc.] to encourage reports of deer concentrations seen while flying, and another to landowners updating them on winter aerial survey work.
- Department publication *The Insider* featured an article on deer management.
- Staff worked with its I&E Division to finalize an informational piece *Winter Feeding of Deer: What You Should Know*.

## Deer Feeding Complaints / Discussions

- Region E continued follow-up discussions with a landowner in Dover Foxcroft wanting to feed deer corn instead of grain to reduce costs. [Corn is not an appropriate deer food].
- Region G discussed winter deer feeding with a landowner in Ashland, discouraging the landowner from feeding hay. [Hay is not an appropriate deer food].

Region G worked with Warden Kevin Pelkey concerning a deer feeding complaint along Route #1 in Monticello. This week a potato farmer began dumping potatoes, and deer trails have started to develop from a cedar swamp [currently being harvested] to the dumping site. One roadkilled deer was reported to the Houlton Police Barracks, but there is the potential for additional roadkilled deer. In past years there has been more than 60 known deer killed at this site, which is likely very conservative since many deer / vehicle collisions go unreported.

**Areas of High Road Mortality** - Region C drafted a letter to DOT to further update highway signs at 6 locations to agreed specifications which are to include text boxes and orange paddles.

**Predation Issues / Incidences** - All regions monitor and direct response as predation incidences are reported.

- Region C reported predation of 3 does and 1 buck locally.
- Region D contacted district wardens inquiring about predation activity.
- Region F conducted a site visit to a DWA in Burlington to investigate a report of predation.

- No predation incidences were reported in Regions D, E, and G.

### **Other Successes, Partnerships, Issues, and Events**

- Region C continued to consult with Downeast Lakes Land Trust on their convening a Downeast Deer Habitat Management Meeting and region participation along with other stakeholders and landowners.
- In Region E a logger from Monson agreed to forgo harvesting in a DWA in the Town of Abbot for at least one winter until the area can be evaluated by regional staff.
- Region F conducted a field day in an Orient DWA with the Woody Wheaton Land Trust and general public concerning potential acquisition that would include more than 1,700 acres of deer wintering habitat.
- Region G continued to investigate a harvest violation in a zoned DWA.
- John Pratte finalized an Outdoor Heritage Fund proposal for \$30,000 to help digitize DWA polygons with active deer use to provide to landowners for cooperative management efforts.

### **Planned Activities for Week of February 27**

**Deer Plan** – Sandy Ritchie hopes to finalize the Deer Plan.

**Monitoring Winter Severity** – Staff will continue monitoring winter conditions [temperature, snow depths, deer sinking depths, and snow profile characteristics] at 26 individual monitoring stations throughout the state to estimate the impact of winter conditions on deer mortality.

**Aerial DWA Surveys** – As weather and aircraft availability permit, regions will continue conducting DWA aerial surveys. BP&L plans to conduct DWA aerial surveys on its downeast lands

**DWA Ground Surveys** – Region E will continue ground surveys in a large DWA complex [9,000 acres] north of Moosehead Lake.

**DWA Harvest Plans** – As opportunities arise, regional staff will review plans for timber harvesting in DWAs.

### **Cooperative DWA Management**

- Region F will conduct a site visit on Huber lands to continue to fine tune a DWA cooperative agreement area.
- Region G will work on cooperative DWA management with Irving. If weather precludes flying, regional staff will also meet with LandVest regards a timber harvest review and inspection in Harrow Brook.

**Deer Research, Surveys, and Data Collections** – As received, staff will continue examining and collecting road-killed does and the number of fetuses per female to derive an index to female productivity and to provide information on breeding chronology.

### **Information and Outreach**

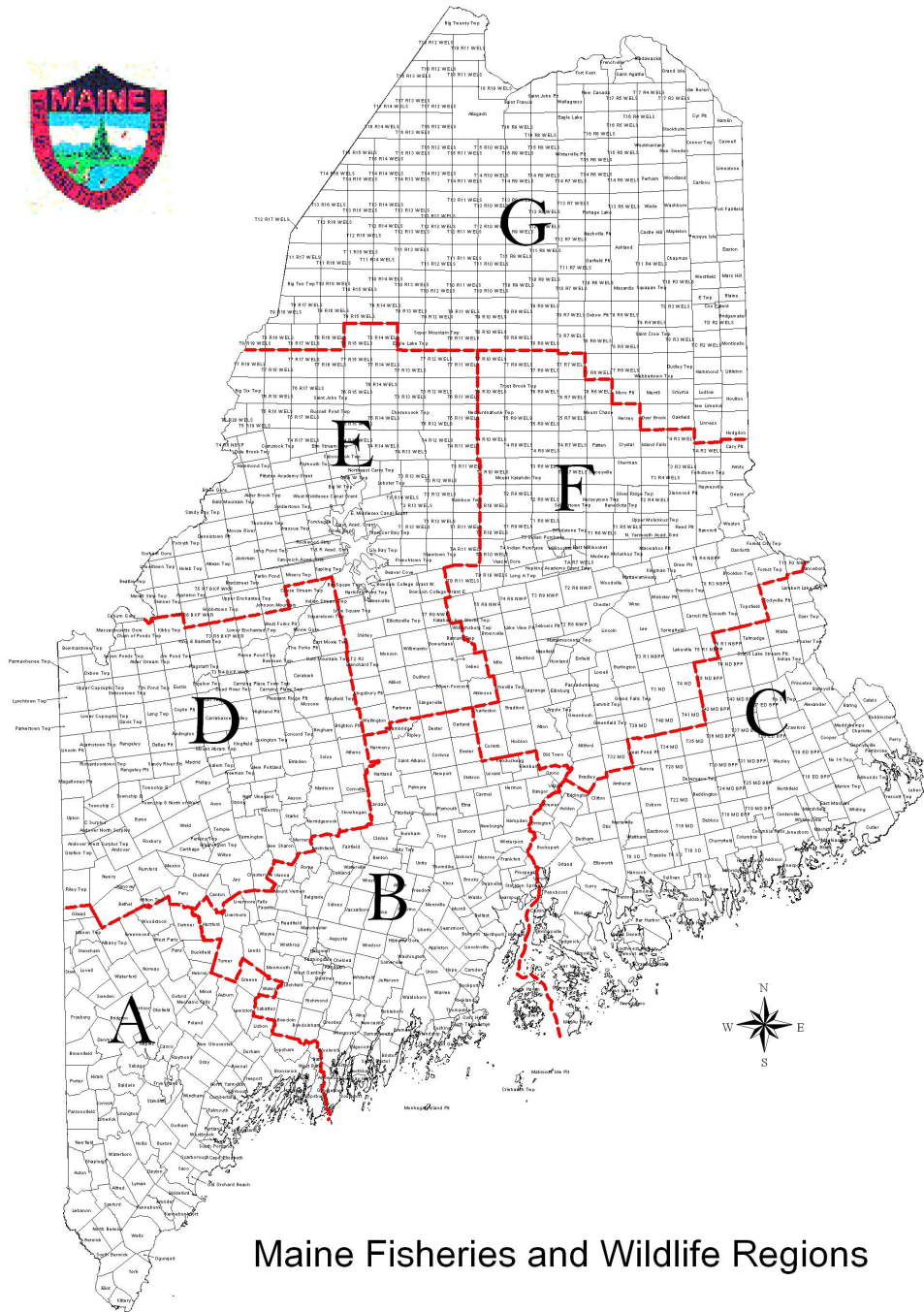
- Region E will meet with a reporter from Yankee Magazine in a DWA complex in Beaver Cove / Lily Bay to discuss the ecology of wintering deer, deer wintering area management, and the pros and cons of feeding deer during winter.
- Region G will meet with the southern Aroostook Natural Resources Conservation Services to discuss deer management and programs that may be used to improve habitat for future use.
- John Pratte and Deb Turcotte will attend Large Animal Collision Work Group at MDOT Augusta office. Agenda items include discussions on special deer warning signs for High Hit areas, 2010 collision numbers, update to DOT staff on current IFW deer related efforts, specific sites with high collision numbers, and coordinating of media outreach.

**Deer Feeding Complaints / Discussions** – All regions will continue to respond to issues as they arise. Department publication *Winter Feeding of Deer: What You Should Know* will be distributed to staff, stakeholders, etc. and later posted on MDIFW's website.

**Predation Issues / Incidences** - All regions will continue monitoring and directing response as predation incidences are reported.

### **Other Successes, Partnerships, Issues, and Events**

- Region C will continue discussions with Downeast Lakes Land Trust on their convening a Downeast Deer Habitat Management meeting and region participation along with other stakeholders and landowners.



Maine Fisheries and Wildlife Regions